

# Abraham Lincoln and Education

Caleb Hazel

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

### LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF THE LINCOLN HISTORICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION



ENDOWED BY
THE LINCOLN
NATIONAL LIFE
INSURANCE
COMPANY

Dr. Louis A. Warren

Edito

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It was about this time that Hazel decided to move to Green County. His name disappeared from the tax books of Hardin County and was entered on the Green County records.

In the meantime, four children had been born to Caleb Hazel and the former Widow Hall—Richard, Peter, Caleb, and Lydia. Richard was born May 14, 1786. When the oldest child was twenty years old, the same year that Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married in Washington County, Caleb Hazel bought twenty acres of land in Green County, about halfway between Greensburg and Hodgenville. Probably he had been living on this place for the past three or four years.

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Hazel's new bride was Mary Stevens. She certified in an oath to the county clerk that her age "is far above the demands of the law." It was just previous to this second marriage in 1816 that Hazel became the school teacher of Abraham Lincoln. He was then a widower and must have been about 55 years of age. He had been a member of the South Fork Baptist Church but was given a letter of dismission about the time the church was divided over the slavery controversy. He probably united with the Little Mount Anti-Slavery Church which was organized at that time and with which Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lincoln were affiliated.

We learn from one of the descendants of Caleb Hazel that "he was what

the old people called a school teacher. Our grandfather Hazel was a good scholar for his time and had many fine books leather bound. I believe they were his father's books brought from Virginia." There are several examples of Caleb Hazel's handwriting in the records of the Hardin County court. There is evidence that he was not only a good scribe but a good grammarian as well. There is no question but what he was able to contribute very much to the early educational training of Abraham Lincoln.

It should not be overlooked that he was very closely connected with the Hanks family through his marriage with Elizabeth Hall. Letters from his descendants, which are now before me, claim that the Halls, Hankses, and Hazels all came into the Kentucky country together and were neighbors back in Virginia. There is evidence that he was a friend of the pioneer Joseph Hanks. We have observed that two of his stepchildren married two of Joseph Hanks children, William Hanks and Nancy Hanks, said to be uncle and aunt of Abraham Lincoln's mother. One of Caleb Hazel's own children and a son of William Hanks married sisters.

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As the first school teacher of Abraham and his sister Sarah was at least fifty years old when he taught them and as Hazel himself was fifty-five when he taught the children of Thomas Lincoln, the future president's first formal instruction was cared for by men above middle age.

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Note: This is the second article in a series on the five school teachers of Abraham Lincoln.

No. 56

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